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**News Release Date:** August 14, 2008  
**News Release Number:** 08 - 21

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## **An Entrepreneurial Spirit At An Early Age!**

Lynette Spano is the Founder, Chairman of the Board, and Chief Executive Officer of SCI Consulting Services, Inc, a company created to specialize in selling hardware, software, and services to the Federal Government. Sensing an opportunity in the software and technology industry, Ms. Spano, with a high school diploma and real world experience, incorporated in 1983. After only one year in business, SCI Consulting Services, Inc. amassed \$1.7 million in sales.

In 1985 Ms. Spano risked her retained earnings to take the small business from the basement of her mother's home in New York to Washington, D.C. and she has not stopped there. Ms. Spano utilized the 8(a) Business Development Program and became a successful graduate. Over the past twenty-four years she has won multiple contract awards for multi-million dollars from many Federal agencies. As a result, SCI Consulting Services, Inc. now has approximately 200 employees nationwide. It has been a dream come true for Ms. Spano and this year alone SCI Consulting Services, Inc. have been awarded contracts valued at over \$239 million.

The 8(a) Business Development Program is an essential instrument for helping socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs gain access to the economic mainstream of American society. SBA has helped thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs over the years to gain a foothold in government contracting. Participation is divided into two phases over nine years: a four-year developmental stage and a five-year transition stage.

Participants can receive sole-source contracts, up to a ceiling of \$3.5 million for goods and services and \$5 million for manufacturing. While SBA helps 8(a) firms build their competitive and institutional know-how, the agency also encourages them to participate in competitive acquisitions. To qualify for program certification, a small business must be owned and controlled by a socially and economically disadvantaged person. Under the Small Business Act, certain presumed groups include African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Native Americans and Subcontinent Asian Americans. New rules make it easier for non-minority firms to participate by proving their social disadvantage.

Growing up in one of the poorest sections of Brooklyn, New York speaking Spanish, English and French, and hurdling sexual, racial, and economic barriers along the way, Ms. Spano a twin daughter of a Cuban immigrant and a Puerto Rican mother never gave up on her dream.

Ms. Spano credits her persistence, determination, and tenacity to her mother, who embedded these traits into her character, as well as an entrepreneurial spirit, at an early age.

Not forgetting her roots or the struggles she endured to achieve her current position, Ms. Spano continues to look for ways of “giving back” to her fellow minority entrepreneurs and the community as a whole. Through her presidency and leadership on the board of directors of the Puerto Rican Figure Skating Federation, Ms. Spano is encouraging and developing new opportunities for Latino youth through sports. It is no surprise that Ms Spano was awarded the Washington Metropolitan Area District Office’s 2008 Women in Business Champion of the Year Award. Ms. Spano was selected for her efforts to increase business and financial opportunities for women and for providing legal, financial or managerial assistance to enhance women’s business ownership. Through her endless commitment she has strengthened the role of women business owners within the community as well as advocating for the women-owned business community as a whole.

Ms. Spano works with organizations within the industry to help inspire and promote entrepreneurs. She provides insight and is a sought after keynote speaker for minority and small business events. With all of this success, Ms. Spano works to strike a balance between the pressures of running a multi-million dollar company and the responsibility of raising her eighteen (18) year old daughter, Amanda. Ms. Spano has managed to continue to lead a thriving business in an aggressive industry. Her dedication to people has translated into many positive successes as she surpasses the expectations of her industry.

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